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302 58. *tâ·la-ōg-*.[1] White clay, used mixed with water, for ornamental painting of the person and of various articles, *e.g.*, bows, baskets, buckets, trays, &c.: the work is done by women: when painting their relatives they spare no pains in executing neat designs with their finger-nails.

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[Note.—Women during pregnancy are in the habit of nibbling small quantities of this substance from time to time, in the belief that it is beneficial to their condition.]

59. *ōg-*. Common whitish-grey clay, lumps of which are found somewhat plentifully in various parts of the islands. It is used, mixed with water, for smearing over the body when the heat is oppressive.[2] A lump of it is placed on the top of the forehead as a symbol of bereavement, and kept there generally until the expiration of the mourning period.[3] It is also sometimes used by way of ornament on the person, by smearing the trunk and limbs with the wash and then, before it has had time to dry, passing the outspread finger-tips over the surface so as to form some pattern.[4]

60. *kòi·ob-*.[5] Red-ochre paint, which is made by mixing red oxide of iron, *ū·pla-* (*vide* next item), with some greasy substance, the fat of the pig or turtle, sometimes of the iguana, dugong, &c., and occasionally the oil of an almond, called *ē·mej-*, is used. This pigment is applied to the person either ornamentally or otherwise. It is accredited with hygienic properties,[6] and from its mode of application it can be readily determined whether the wearer is suffering or rejoicing. The nostrils and centre of the upper lip are occasionally painted with it, as the smell of the fat is agreeable to them.[7] Before a corpse is removed for burial it is smeared over the face and neck with this paint as a mark of respect, and in order to please the departed spirit.

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61. *ū·pla-*. Red oxide of iron after it has been dried and baked. It is principally used in making the pigment described in the preceding paragraph. It is also employed in the manufacture of the red wax, called *kâ·ngatâ-būj-* (*vide* next item).

462 62. *kâ·ngatâ-būj-*. Red wax, generally prepared by men, composed of *â·ja-pīd-*, *rīm-*, and *ū·pla-* (items 56, 55, and 61); in the absence of the last-named ingredient *kòi·ob-* (item 60) is

[1] *Vide* Part III, "Painting," paragraph 7.
[2] *Vide* Part I, "Anatomy and Physiology," paragraph 5.
[3] *Vide* Part II, "Death and Burial," paragraphs 2, 6, 8, and footnote [1].
[4] *Vide* Part III, "Painting," paragraphs 5 and 6.
[5] *ŭ·pla-* is collected chiefly during the dry months; in its natural condition, as found, it is called *kòi·ob-ch·ā·lnga-*; in that condition it is applied to sores, and to the persons of fever patients: it is administered internally for coughs, fevers, &c. (*vide* Part I, "Medicine," paragraphs 4 and 5).
[6] *Vide* Part I, "Medicine," paragraph 2.
[7] *Vide* Part I, "Odour."

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substituted. These three substances are melted and stirred over a fire until of a proper consistency; the pigment is then poured into small pots or large shallow shells, where on cooling it soon hardens. When required for use the pot or shell is placed on the fire and the melting wax applied according to fancy. The string fastenings of fish and pig arrows (items 4, 5, and 6) the turtle harpoon (item 10), and pig spear (item 9), are protected with a coating of this wax, and it is applied ornamentally to the food trays (item 72), nautilus shells (item 14), and the outside of buckets (item 13); it is also used for closing cracks in buckets, and in canoes if not too large.

63. *chūˈlnga-*. olive-coloured clay found in small springs in the jungles: in its liquid form it is applied medicinally after the manner of *kòiˈob-chūˈlnga-* (*vide* footnote [6], p. 184).

64. *yōˈlba-*. (*Anodendron paniculatum*), the fibre of which is much valued on account of its excellence; string made from it is used for bowstrings and arrow fastenings, for netting the *châˈpanga-* (item 22), and *rāb-* (item 42), for making their various necklaces and other personal ornaments, and also for the fastenings of knives and turtle harpoons.

65. *pīˈlita-* (*Gnetum edule*), from the fibre of which string is prepared and used almost exclusively by women, chiefly for the manufacture of the *kūd-* (item 20), and *pārˈepa-* (item 23); it is not sufficiently strong to serve as arrow fastenings, though on an emergency it is sometimes used for this purpose.

66. *alˈaba-* (*Melochia velutina*). From fibre obtained from this tree rope is made for turtle-lines (*bēˈtmo-*), nets, and cables, the preparation and manufacture of which devolve on men; the bark of this tree also furnishes the material of which the *chīp* (item 24) or baby-slings are made.

67. *pòˈtòkla-*.[1] Netting-needles, made in two sizes of bamboo and used in making nets.

[NOTE.—The turtle-net (item 12) is not made with netting-needles, but with two sticks called *kūˈtegbo-*.[2]]

68. *pó-chó-*. Bamboo knives, which are shaped into form while green and then dried and charred over a fire to render them sharp and fit for use; formerly they were employed for cutting meat and other food.[3]

69. *wai-chó-* and *pór-chó-*. Two varieties of cane knives, but similar to item 68.

70. *tōˈug-*.[4] Torch, made by women, of resin wrapped in a large leaf (*Crinum lorifolium*); it is used when fishing, travelling, or

[1] *Vide* Plate IX, fig. 12.
[2] These are made of a light hard wood known as *bēˈrewil-*.
[3] *Vide* Plate IX, fig. 10.
[4] *Vide* Plate VIII, fig. 66.

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291 754 *naquinēghē* exposes the former owner to harm. Ill-disposed persons could use it for black magic practices. I collected specimens of this garment, all of them, however, brand-new – for the above-mentioned reason. To avoid trouble to the owner, nobody is allowed to touch the *naquinēghē*, which is worn in front of the vulva. To touch it is a deadly offence. Aside from the *naquinēghē*, Andaman 842 263 colonists attribute the natives' sterility to their abhorrence of salt. Another opinion would have it that the lack of salt transforms human saliva into poison: the Jarawas, by spitting on their arrows render them poisonous. The absurdity of this belief is so evident that it requires no confutation. The Onge refuse to eat salt because they consider it unhealthy, or, to say the least, disgusting.

III. Illnesses and Onge Curative Methods

164 Few illnesses affect the Onge, but they succumb to those few with surprising speed. Often they become seriously ill for mysterious reasons and in spite of their robust appearance. Smallpox, tuberculosis and poliomyelitis are unknown in Little Andaman, although they sometimes strike in the nearby Nicobars. Measles broke out on the island on more than one occasion, killing off all the inhabitants of several communal huts, which I later found deserted and in ruins. With regard to syphilis, the Indian Census of 1931 quotes an old remark of PORTMAN's concerning a few individuals considered by him as infected. This was later denied.

Onge women are more resistant to illness than men. Wounds heal promptly in both sexes, without the aid of remedies. A few of the older men, however, had suppurating sores on their legs, slow to disappear even when disinfected and treated by me with European medicines. No similar sores were found on women. On the other hand, women suffer more than men from ringworm, mainly in the umbilical region. Nothing is done to rid them of it because the discomfort is slight. I suggested an Indian cure made with the leaves of the neem tree, or Melia azedarach, very common in Southern Asia where it is considered sacred. I imported the plant to Little Andaman, but the Onge displayed no interest in it. I found a single instance of leucoderma, in a woman with whitish spots on her hands and lips. I could get no reliable information about the incidence of cancer, but it appears to be rare on the island. No baldness is to be seen in Little Andaman, and I found few traces of greying hair, as the Onge die young. A transversal bregmatic furrow is noticeable in all individuals, male and female, as a consequence of carrying loads hung from their heads by a strip of bark. The Onge start doing this in childhood. An artificial, unintentional deformation of the skull is the result of that uncomfortable habit.

[752] [123] [123] [142] [482]

751 302 For hygienic reasons the Little Andaman aborigines paint their bodies with refined clay and ochre of various shades, mainly reddish. This gives the women occasion to embellish the bodies of their husbands with an endless variety of [386] geometrical designs. Every year I found changes in their patterns, and I

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documented the fact in a number of photographs. The purpose, however, is purely hygienic: an unpainted body is, in their opinion, exposed to certain illness. They explained this belief to me by saying that without paint the body becomes "hot". The men who travelled with me far from women were anxious every day to spread clay on face, chest and limbs, just to avoid "heat" or, in other words, fever. I thought of malaria, but they do not suffer from it. Of this I will speak later on.

Rough clay is applied daily, on infant bodies as well as on adults, for health purposes. It is used to cure all kinds of sickness, together with ochre, turtle fat and honey. Honey spread on wounds appears to hasten healing. Identical curative methods are employed in Oceania. They probably existed among the Tasmanians, and are still used in Australia by the aborigines. I found nothing of the kind in Africa, where honey is plentiful. The Onge consider clay, ochre, honey and turtle fat good for external and internal treatment alike both preventive and curative. Powdered bees' wax of a dark colour is often added. I saw mothers give their children, as a laxative, a number of pills made of similar ingredients. No bigger than common hazelnuts, the pills are red and greasy. In Onge forests I saw some small excavations, a few feet deep, made to extract the medicinal clay from special ground pockets. In its natural form the clay is light coloured, powdery and free of stones. When it is burnt the colour changes, assuming red, yellow, whitish or black shades according to the different qualities used, all believed to possess healing properties and to ensure hygienic colouring of the body. Mixed as described above, clay is used by the Onge in every circumstance from fever to snake or scorpion bite, constipation, breast infection in women, or post-delivery bleeding.

Belief in the medicinal properties of clay is as old as humanity itself. Even among contemporary European peoples, notwithstanding severe criticism, clay is still honoured as health-giving, not, I must say, on wholly foolish grounds. The Onge, who smear their bodies constantly with clay, have the softest, most velvety skin that I ever saw anywhere in the world. Wounds spread with clay mixed with honey and fat leave negligible scars. The laxative and germ-killing action of clay is admitted by physicians in many countries, including Europe. It never causes infection. Geophagism has ancient origins, and we find it practiced by many modern populations. Children of every race and all young wild animals lick clay instinctively to absorb the mineral salts required by a developing organism. The Onge habit of using clay for healing purposes can be set, therefore, in a very wide frame.

Mental and nervous disorders are rare in Little Andaman. Few natives are subject to epilepsy — an important matter for the Onge: they consider such people as possessed by spirits who speak through their mouths, and respectfully question them as oracles. Several Onge chiefs, such as Chief Tchôtâ of Tambê-ê-buiê, are apt to go into trances that have all the appearance of epileptic fits. They were elected chiefs on the strength of their epilepsy!

Constant exercise keeps eyesight and hearing extremely sharp in the Onge. I saw no single case of myopia or presbyopia among the natives, nor